

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended to incorporate the proper headings under 37 CFR 1.77(b).

Kindly note that this application is a continuation of international application number PCT/GB2002/00319 filed July 11, 2002. The specification has been amended to reflect this and therefore certified copies of the priority documents are not required.

Claim 1 has been amended to further distinguish the present invention from the prior art. Claims 2-26 have been cancelled and correspond to claims 27-51 respectively. New claims 52-56 have been added and are referenced at Page 8 line 20 through Page 10 line 34.

The present invention is directed to a solid oxide fuel cell stack comprising a plurality of modules 12 each having a first and second end wherein each module 12 comprises an elongate hollow member 14. More importantly, at least one end of each module 12 is connected to an end of an adjacent module by a connector 42 (See Fig. 4) to allow reactant to flow sequentially through the modules in order to reduce thermal and mechanical stresses in a solid oxide fuel cell stack as expressly claimed in currently amended claim 1 (See Page 5 line 26 through Page 6 line 2; and Page 8 line 7 through Page 11 line 8).

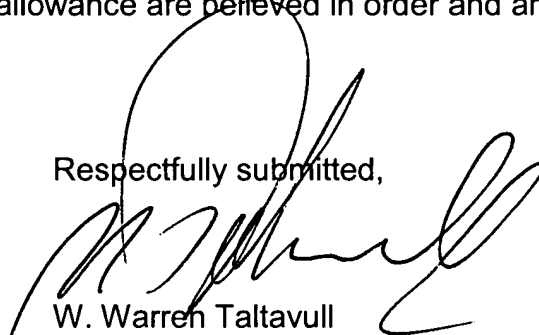
GARDNER et al. (US 5486428) discloses a solid oxide fuel cell stack comprising a plurality of modules wherein each of the first modules 24 comprises a first reactant distribution member 28 defining a plurality of parallel first passages 30. A porous support structure 36 extends transversely of the first distribution member 28 and contacts the peaks of plate 32 and troughs of plate 34 to define a plurality of parallel second passages 38. The plate 32 comprises apertures 55 located midway between the ends of first passages 30 to allow the fuel to flow from the first passages 30 into the second passages 38 to supply fuel to the solid oxide fuel cells. In a further embodiment, illustrated in Fig. 21) it

should be noted that the modules 224 and 226 are arranged such that the passages 230 and 238 are perpendicular to the third and fourth passages 256 and 262 wherein the first reactant is provided to the first module via the first passage while the second reactant is provided to the second module via the third passage (Column 12 line 66 to Column 14 line 12). Therefore, the fuel of GARDNER et al. does not flow sequentially from one module 24 to an adjacent parallel module 24 (See Fig. 4). Moreover, GARDNER et al. fails to teach or disclose connecting one end of a module to an end of an adjacent module by means of a connector such that the reactant flows sequentially through the modules as expressly claimed in currently amended claim 1.

From the reasons provided above, the present invention is believed novel and inventive over GARDNER et al.

Entry of this amendment is solicited, is believed appropriate, and is believed to distinguish the invention from the cited references. For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance are believed in order and are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



W. Warren Taltavull
Reg. No. 25647

Manelli Denison & Selter PLLC
2000 M Street N.W
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 261 1047